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“Lord Douglas”

From: The Project Gutenberg EBook of **Children of the Bush**, by Henry Lawson

*They hold him true, who's true to one,
However false he be.*

-The Rouseabouts of Rouseabouts.

The Imperial Hotel was rather an unfortunate name for an out-back town pub, for out back is the stronghold of Australian democracy; it was the out-back vote and influence that brought about “One Man One Vote,” “Payment of Members,” and most of the democratic legislation of late years, and from out back came the overwhelming vote in favour of Australian as Imperial Federation.

The name Royal Hotel is as familiar as that of the Railway Hotel, and passes unnoticed and ungrowled at, even by bush republicans. The Royal Hotel at Bourke was kept by an Irishman, one O'Donohoo, who was Union to the backbone, loudly in favour of “Australia for the Australians,” and, of course, against even the democratic New South Wales Government of the time. He went round town all one St Patrick's morning with a bunch of green ribbon fastened to his coat-tail with a large fish-hook, and wasn't aware of the fact till he sat down on the point of it. But that's got nothing to do with it.

The Imperial Hotel at Bourke was unpopular from the first. It was said that the very existence of the house was the result of a swindle. It had been built with money borrowed on certain allotments in the centre of the town and on the understanding that it should be built on the mortgaged land, whereas it was erected on a free allotment. Which fact was discovered, greatly to its surprise, by the building society when it came to foreclose on the allotments some years later. While the building was being erected the Bourke people understood, in a vague way, that it was to be a convent (perhaps the building society thought so, too), and when certain ornaments in brick and cement in the shape of a bishop's mitre were placed over the corners of the walls the question seemed decided. But when the place was finished a bar was fitted up, and up went the sign, to the disgust of the other publicans, who didn't know a licence had been taken out--for licensing didn't go by local option in those days. It was rumoured that the place belonged to, and the whole business was engineered by, a priest. And priests are men of the world.

The Imperial Hotel was patronized by the pastoralists, the civil servants, the bank manager and clerks--all the scrub aristocracy; it was the headquarters of the Pastoralists' Union in Bourke; a barracks for blacklegs brought up from Sydney to take the place of Union shearers on strike; and the new Governor, on his inevitable visit to Bourke, was

banqueted at the Imperial Hotel. The editor of the local "capitalistic rag" stayed there; the pastoralists' member was elected mostly by dark ways and means devised at the Imperial Hotel, and one of its managers had stood as a dummy candidate to split the Labour vote; the management of the hotel was his reward. In short, it was there that most of the plots were hatched to circumvent Freedom, and put away or deliver into the clutches of law and order certain sons of Light and Liberty who believed in converting blacklegs into jellies by force of fists when bribes, gentle persuasion and pure Australian language failed to convert them to clean Unionism. The Imperial Hotel was called the "Squatters' Pub," the "Scabbery," and other and more expressive names.

The hotel became still more unpopular after Percy Douglas had managed it for a while. He was an avowed enemy of Labour Unionists. He employed Chinese cooks, and that in the height of the anti-Chinese agitation in Australia, and he was known to have kindly feelings towards the Afghans who, with their camels, were running white carriers off the roads. If an excited Unionist called a man a "blackleg" or "scab" in the Imperial bar he was run out--sometimes with great difficulty, and occasionally as far as the lock-up.

Percy Douglas was a fine-looking man, "wid a chest on him an' well hung--a fine fee-_gure_ of a man," as O'Donohoo pronounced it. He was tall and erect, he dressed well, wore small side-whiskers, had an eagle nose, and looked like an aristocrat. Like many of his type, who start sometimes as billiard-markers and suddenly become hotel managers in Australia, nothing was known of his past. Jack Mitchell reckoned, by the way he treated his employees and spoke to workmen, that he was the educated son of an English farmer--gone wrong and sent out to Australia. Someone called him "Lord Douglas," and the nickname caught on.

He made himself well hated. He got One-eyed Bogan "three months' hard" for taking a bottle of whisky off the Imperial bar counter because he (Bogan) was drunk and thirsty and had knocked down his cheque, and because there was no one minding the bar at the moment.

Lord Douglas dismissed the barmaid, and, as she was leaving, he had her boxes searched and gave her in charge for stealing certain articles belonging to the hotel. The chaps subscribed to defend the case, and subsequently put a few pounds together for the girl. She proved her gratitude by bringing a charge of a baby against one of the chaps--but that was only one of the little ways of the world, as Mitchell said. She joined a Chinese camp later on.

Lord Douglas employed a carpenter to do some work about the hotel, and because the carpenter left before the job was finished, Lord Douglas locked his tools in an outhouse and refused to give them up; and when the carpenter, with the spirit of an Australian workman, broke the

padlock and removed his tool-chest, the landlord gave him in charge for breaking and entering. The chaps defended the case and won it, and hated Lord Douglas as much as if he were their elder brother. Mitchell was the only one to put in a word for him.

"I've been puzzling it out," said Mitchell, as he sat nursing his best leg in the Union Office, "and, as far as I can see, it all amounts to this--we're all mistaken in Lord Douglas. We don't know the man. He's all right. We don't understand him. He's really a sensitive, good-hearted man who's been shoved a bit off the track by the world. It's the world's fault--he's not to blame. You see, when he was a youngster he was the most good-natured kid in the school; he was always soft, and, consequently, he was always being imposed upon, and bullied, and knocked about. Whenever he got a penny to buy lollies he'd count 'em out carefully and divide 'em round amongst his schoolmates and brothers and sisters. He was the only one that worked at home, and consequently they all hated him. His father respected him, but didn't love him, because he wasn't a younger son, and wasn't bringing his father's grey hairs down in sorrow to the grave. If it was in Australia, probably Lord Douglas was an elder son and had to do all the hard graft, and teach himself at night, and sleep in a bark skillion while his younger brothers benefited--they were born in the new brick house and went to boarding-schools. His mother had a contempt for him because he wasn't a black sheep and a prodigal, and, when the old man died, the rest of the family got all the stuff and Lord Douglas was kicked out because they could do without him now. And the family hated him like poison ever afterwards (especially his mother), and spread lies about him--because they had treated him shamefully and because his mouth was shut--they knew he wouldn't speak. Then probably he went in for Democracy and worked for Freedom, till Freedom trod on him once too often with her hob-nailed boots. Then the chances are, in the end, he was ruined by a girl or woman, and driven, against his will, to take refuge in pure individualism. He's all right, only we don't appreciate him. He's only fighting against his old ideals--his old self that comes up sometimes--and that's what makes him sweat his barmaids and servants, and hate us, and run us in; and perhaps when he cuts up extra rough it's because his conscience kicks him when he thinks of the damned soft fool he used to be. He's all right--take my word for it. It's all a mask. Why, he might be one of the kindest-hearted men in Bourke underneath."

Tom Hall rubbed his head and blinked, as if he was worried by an idea that there might be some facts in Mitchell's theories.

"You're allers findin' excuses for blacklegs an' scabs, Mitchell," said Barcoo-Rot, who took Mitchell seriously (and who would have taken a laughing jackass seriously). "Why, you'd find a white spot on a squatter. I wouldn't be surprised if you blacklegged yourself in the end."

This was an unpardonable insult, from a Union point of view, and the chaps half-unconsciously made room on the floor for Barcoo-Rot to fall after Jack Mitchell hit him. But Mitchell took the insult philosophically.

“Well, Barcoo-Rot,” he said, nursing the other leg, “for the matter of that, I did find a white spot on a squatter once. He lent me a quid when I was hard up. There’s white spots on the blackest characters if you only drop prejudice and look close enough. I suppose even Jack-the-Ripper’s character was speckled. Why, I can even see spots on your character, sometimes, Barcoo-Rot. I’ve known white spots to spread on chaps’ characters until they were little short of saints. Sometimes I even fancy I can feel my own wings sprouting. And as for turning blackleg--well, I suppose I’ve got a bit of the crawler in my composition (most of us have), and a man never knows what might happen to his principles.”

“Well,” said Barcoo-Rot, “I beg yer pardon--ain’t that enough?”

“No,” said Mitchell, “you ought to wear a three-bushel bag and ashes for three months, and drink water; but since the police would send you to an asylum if you did that, I think the best thing we can do is to go out and have a drink.”

Lord Douglas married an Australian girl somewhere, somehow, and brought her to Bourke, and there were two little girls--regular little fairies. She was a gentle, kind-hearted little woman, but she didn’t seem to improve him much, save that he was very good to her.

“It’s mostly that way,” commented Mitchell. “When a boss gets married and has children he thinks he’s got a greater right to grind his fellowmen and rob their wives and children. I’d never work for a boss with a big family--it’s hard enough to keep a single boss nowadays in this country.”

After one stormy election, at the end of a long and bitter shearing strike, One-eyed Bogan, his trusty enemy, Barcoo-Rot, and one or two other enthusiastic reformers were charged with rioting, and got from one to three months’ hard. And they had only smashed three windows of the Imperial Hotel and chased the Chinese cook into the river.

“I used to have some hopes for Democracy,” commented Mitchell, “but I’ve got none now. How can you expect Liberty, Equality or Fraternity--how can you expect Freedom and Universal Brotherhood and Equal Rights in a country where Sons of Light get three months’ hard for breaking windows and bashing a Chinaman? It almost makes me long to sail away in a

gallant barque.”

There were other cases in connection with the rotten-egging of Capitalistic candidates on the Imperial Hotel balcony, and it was partly on the evidence of Douglas and his friends that certain respectable Labour leaders got heavy terms of imprisonment for rioting and “sedition” and “inciting,” in connection with organized attacks on blacklegs and their escorts.

Retribution, if it was retribution, came suddenly and in a most unexpected manner to Lord Douglas.

It seems he employed a second carpenter for six months to repair and make certain additions to the hotel, and put him off under various pretences until he owed him a hundred pounds or thereabout. At last, immediately after an exciting interview with Lord Douglas, the carpenter died suddenly of heart disease. The widow, a strong-minded bushwoman, put a bailiff in the hotel on a very short notice--and against the advice of her lawyer, who thought the case hopeless--and the Lord Douglas bubble promptly burst. He had somehow come to be regarded as the proprietor of the hotel, but now the real proprietors or proprietor--he was still said to be a priest--turned Douglas out and put in a new manager. The old servants were paid after some trouble. The local storekeepers and one or two firms in Sydney, who had large accounts against the Imperial Hotel (and had trusted it, mainly because it was patronized by Capitalism and Fat), were never paid.

Lord Douglas cleared out to Sydney, leaving his wife and children, for the present, with her brother, a hay-and-corn storekeeper, who also had a large and hopeless account against the hotel; and when the brother went broke and left the district she rented a two-roomed cottage and took in dressmaking.

Dressmaking didn't pay so well in the bush then as it did in the old diggings days when sewing-machines were scarce and the possession of one meant an independent living to any girl--when diggers paid ten shillings for a strip of “flannen” doubled over and sewn together, with holes for arms and head, and called a shirt. Mrs Douglas had a hard time, with her two little girls, who were still better and more prettily dressed than any other children in Bourke. One grocer still called on her for orders and pretended to be satisfied to wait “till Mr Douglas came back,” and when she would no longer order what he considered sufficient provisions for her and the children, and commenced buying sugar, etc., by the pound, for cash, he one day sent a box of groceries round to her. He pretended it was a mistake.

“However,” he said, “I'd be very much obliged if you could use 'em, Mrs Douglas. I'm overstocked now; haven't got room for another tin of

sardines in the shop. Don't you worry about bills, Mrs Douglas; I can wait till Douglas comes home. I did well enough out of the Imperial Hotel when your husband had it, and a pound's worth of groceries won't hurt me now. I'm only too glad to get rid of some of the stock."

She cried a little, thought of the children, and kept the groceries.

"I suppose I'll be sold up soon meself if things don't git brighter," said that grocer to a friend, "so it doesn't matter much."

The same with Foley the butcher, who had a brogue with a sort of drawling groan in it, and was a cynic of the Mitchell school.

"You see," he said, "she's as proud as the devil, but when I send round a bit o' rawst, or porrk, or the undercut o' the blade-bawn, she thinks o' the little gur-r-rls before she thinks o' sendin' it back to me. That's where I've got the pull on her."

The Giraffe borrowed a horse and tip-dray one day at the beginning of winter and cut a load of firewood in the bush, and next morning, at daylight, Mrs Douglas was nearly startled out of her life by a crash at the end of the cottage, which made her think that the chimney had fallen in, or a tree fallen on the house; and when she slipped on a wrapper and looked out, she saw a load of short-cut wood by the chimney, and caught a glimpse of the back view of the Giraffe, who stood in the dray with his legs wide apart and was disappearing into the edge of the scrub; and soon the rapid clock-clock-clock of the wheels died away in the west, as if he were making for West Australia.

The next we heard of Lord Douglas he had got two years' hard for embezzlement in connection with some canvassing he had taken up. Mrs Douglas fell ill--a touch of brain-fever--and one of the labourers' wives took care of the children while two others took turns in nursing. While she was recovering, Bob Brothers sent round the hat, and, after a conclave in the Union Office--as mysterious as any meeting ever called with the object of downing bloated Capitalism--it was discovered that one of the chaps--who didn't wish his name to be mentioned--had borrowed just twenty-five pounds from Lord Douglas in the old days and now wished to return it to Mrs Douglas. So the thing was managed, and if she had any suspicions she kept them to herself. She started a little fancy goods shop and got along fairly comfortable.

Douglas, by the way, was, publicly, supposed, for her sake and because of the little girls, to be away in West Australia on the goldfields.

Time passes without much notice out back, and one hot day, when the sun hung behind the fierce sandstorms from the northwest as dully lurid as

he ever showed in a London fog, Lord Douglas got out of the train that had just finished its five-hundred-miles' run, and not seeing a new-chum porter, who started forward by force of habit to take his bag, he walked stiffly off the platform and down the main street towards his wife's cottage.

He was very gaunt, and his eyes, to those who passed him closely, seemed to have a furtive, hunted expression. He had let his beard grow, and it had grown grey.

It was within a few days of Christmas--the same Christmas that we lost the Pretty Girl in the Salvation Army. As a rule the big shearing-sheds within a fortnight of Bourke cut out in time for the shearers to reach the town and have their Christmas dinners and sprees--and for some of them to be locked up over Christmas Day--within sound of a church-going bell. Most of the chaps gathered in the Shearers' Union Office on New Year's Eve and discussed Douglas amongst other things.

"I vote we kick the cow out of the town!" snarled One-eyed Bogan, viciously.

"We can't do that," said Bob Brothers (the Giraffe), speaking more promptly than usual. "There's his wife and youngsters to consider, yer know."

"He something well deserted his wife," snarled Began, "an' now he comes crawlin' back to her to keep him."

"Well," said Mitchell, mildly, "but we ain't all got as much against him as you have, Began."

"He made a crimson jail-bird of me!" snapped Bogan. "Well," said Mitchell, "that didn't hurt you much, anyway; it rather improved your character if anything. Besides, he made a jail-bird of himself afterwards, so you ought to have a fellow-feeling--a feathered feeling, so to speak. Now you needn't be offended, Bogan, we're all jail-birds at heart, only we haven't all got the pluck."

"I'm in favour of blanky well tarrin' an' featherin' him an' kickin' him out of the town!" shouted Bogan. "It would be a good turn to his wife, too; she'd be well rid of the----."

"Perhaps she's fond of him," suggested Mitchell; "I've known such cases before. I saw them sitting together on the veranda last night when they thought no one was looking."

"He deserted her," said One-eyed Bogan, in a climbing-down tone, "and left her to starve."

"Perhaps the police were to blame for that," said Mitchell. "You know you deserted all your old mates once for three months, Bogan, and it wasn't your fault."

"He seems to be a crimson pet of yours, Jack Mitchell," said Bogan, firing up.

"Ah, well, all I know," said Mitchell, standing up and stretching himself wearily, "all I know is that he looked like a gentleman once, and treated us like a gentleman, and cheated us like a gentleman, and ran some of us in like a gentleman, and, as far as I can see, he's served his time like a gentleman and come back to face us and live himself down like a man. I always had a sneaking regard for a gentleman."

"Why, Mitchell, I'm beginning to think you are a gentleman yourself," said Jake Boreham.

"Well," said Mitchell, "I used to have a suspicion once that I had a drop of blue blood in me somewhere, and it worried me a lot; but I asked my old mother about it one day, and she scalded me--God bless her!--and father chased me with a stockwhip, so I gave up making inquiries."

"You'll join the bloomin' Capitalists next," sneered One-eyed Bogan.

"I wish I could, Bogan," said Mitchell. "I'd take a trip to Paris and see for myself whether the Frenchwomen are as bad as they're made out to be, or go to Japan. But what are we going to do about Douglas?"

"Kick the skunk out of town, or boycott him!" said one or two. "He ought to be tarred and feathered and hanged."

"Couldn't do worse than hang him," commented Jake Boreham, cheerfully.

"Oh, yes, we could," said Mitchell, sitting down, resting his elbows on his knees, and marking his points with one forefinger on the other. "For instance, we might boil him slow in tar. We might skin him alive. We might put him in a cage and poke him with sticks, with his wife and children in another cage to look on and enjoy the fun."

The chaps, who had been sitting quietly listening to Mitchell, and grinning, suddenly became serious and shifted their positions uneasily.

"But I can tell you what would hurt his feelings more than anything else we could do," said Mitchell.

"Well, what is it, Jack?" said Tom Hall, rather impatiently.

"Send round the hat and take up a collection for him," said Mitchell, "enough to let him get away with his wife and children and start life again in some less respectable town than Bourke. You needn't grin, I'm serious about it."

There was a thoughtful pause, and one or two scratched their heads. "His wife seems pretty sick," Mitchell went on in a reflective tone. "I passed the place this morning and saw him scrubbing out the floor. He's been doing a bit of house-painting for old Heegard to-day. I suppose he learnt it in jail. I saw him at work and touched my hat to him."

"What!" cried Tom Hall, affecting to shrink from Mitchell in horror.

"Yes," said Mitchell, "I'm not sure that I didn't take my hat off. Now I know it's not bush religion for a man to touch his hat, except to a funeral, or a strange roof or woman sometimes; but when I meet a braver man than myself I salute him. I've only met two in my life."

"And who were they, Jack?" asked Jake Boreham.

"One," said Mitchell--"one is Douglas, and the other--well, the other was the man I used to be. But that's got nothing to do with it."

"But perhaps Douglas thought you were crowing over him when you took off your hat to him--sneerin' at him, like, Mitchell," reflected Jake Boreham.

"No, Jake," said Mitchell, growing serious suddenly. "There are ways of doing things that another man understands."

They all thought for a while.

"Well," said Tom Hall, "supposing we do take up a collection for him, he'd be too damned proud to take it."

"But that's where we've got the pull on him," said Mitchell, brightening up. "I heard Dr Morgan say that Mrs Douglas wouldn't live if she wasn't sent away to a cooler place, and Douglas knows it; and, besides, one of the little girls is sick. We've got him in a corner and he'll have to take the stuff. Besides, two years in jail takes a lot of the pride out of a man."

"Well, I'm damned if I'll give a sprat to help the man who tried his best to crush the Unions!" said One-eyed Bogan.

"Damned if I will either!" said Barcoo-Rot.

“Now, look here, One-eyed Bogan,” said Mitchell, “I don’t like to harp on old things, for I know they bore you, but when you returned to public life that time no one talked of kicking you out of the town. In fact, I heard that the chaps put a few pounds together to help you get away for a while till you got over your modesty.”

No one spoke.

“I passed Douglas’s place on my way here from my camp to-night,” Mitchell went on musingly, “and I saw him walking up and down in the yard with his sick child in his arms. You remember that little girl, Bogan? I saw her run and pick up your hat and give it to you one day when you were trying to put it on with your feet. You remember, Bogan? The shock nearly sobered you.”

There was a very awkward pause. The position had become too psychological altogether and had to be ended somehow. The awkward silence had to be broken, and Bogan broke it. He turned up Bob Brothers’s hat, which was lying on the table, and “chucked” in a “quid,” qualifying the hat and the quid, and disguising his feelings with the national oath of the land.

“We’ve had enough of this gory, maudlin, sentimental tommy-rot,” he said. “Here, Barcoo, stump up or I’ll belt it out of your hide! I’ll—I’ll take yer to pieces!”

But Douglas didn’t leave the town. He sent his wife and children to Sydney until the heat wave was past, built a new room on to the cottage, and started a book and newspaper shop, and a poultry farm in the back paddock, and flourished.

They called him Mr Douglas for a while, then Douglas, then Percy Douglas, and now he is well-known as Old Daddy Douglas, and the Sydney _Worker_, _Truth_, and _Bulletin_, and other democratic rags are on sale at his shop. He is big with schemes for locking the Darling River, and he gets his drink at O’Donohoo’s. He is scarcely yet regarded as a straight-out democrat. He was a gentleman once, Mitchell said, and the old blood was not to be trusted. But, last elections, Douglas worked quietly for Unionism, and gave the leaders certain hints, and put them up to various electioneering dodges which enabled them to return, in the face of Monopoly, a Labour member who is as likely to go straight as long as any other Labour member.

Prefatory Sonnets

By Henry Kendall

From The Project Gutenberg Etext of **An Anthology of Australian Verse**

I.

I purposed once to take my pen and write,
Not songs, like some, tormented and awry
With passion, but a cunning harmony
Of words and music caught from glen and height,
And lucid colours born of woodland light
And shining places where the sea-streams lie.
But this was when the heat of youth glowed white,
And since I've put the faded purpose by.
I have no faultless fruits to offer you
Who read this book; but certain syllables
Herein are borrowed from unfooted dells
And secret hollows dear to noontide dew;
And these at least, though far between and few,
May catch the sense like subtle forest spells.

II.

So take these kindly, even though there be
Some notes that unto other lyres belong,
Stray echoes from the elder sons of song;
And think how from its neighbouring native sea
The pensive shell doth borrow melody.
I would not do the lordly masters wrong
By filching fair words from the shining throng
Whose music haunts me as the wind a tree!
Lo, when a stranger in soft Syrian glooms
Shot through with sunset treads the cedar dells,
And hears the breezy ring of elfin bells
Far down by where the white-haired cataract booms,
He, faint with sweetness caught from forest smells,
Bears thence, unwitting, plunder of perfumes.

The Way To Arcady

By H. C. Bunner

From The Project Gutenberg EBook of **A Vers de Société Anthology**, by Various

OH, what's the way to Arcady,
To Arcady, to Arcady;
Oh, what's the way to Arcady,
Where all the leaves are merry?

Oh, what's the way to Arcady?
The spring is rustling in the tree—
The tree the wind is blowing through—
It sets the blossoms flickering white.
I knew not skies could burn so blue
Nor any breezes blow so light.
They blow an old-time way for me,
Across the world to Arcady.

Oh, what's the way to Arcady?
Sir Poet, with the rusty coat,
Quit mocking of the song-bird's note.
How have you heart for any tune,
You with the wayworn russet shoon?
Your scrip, a-swinging by your side,
Gapes with a gaunt mouth hungry-wide.
I'll brim it well with pieces red,
If you will tell the way to tread.

Oh, I am bound for Arcady,
And if you but keep pace with me
You tread the way to Arcady.

And where away lies Arcady,
And how long yet may the journey be?

Ah, that (quothe) I do not know—
Across the clover and the snow—
Across the frost, across the flowers—
Through summer seconds and winter hours.
I've trod the way my whole life long,
And know not now where it may be;
My guide is but the stir to song,
That tells me I cannot go wrong,
Or clear or dark the pathway be
Upon the road to Arcady.

But how shall I do who cannot sing?

I was wont to sing, once on a time—
There is never an echo now to ring
Remembrance back to the trick of rhyme.

'Tis strange you cannot sing (quoth he),
The folk all sing in Arcady.

But how may he find Arcady
Who hath nor youth nor melody?

What, know you not, old man (quoth he)—
Your hair is white, your face is wise—
That Love must kiss that Mortal's eyes
Who hopes to see fair Arcady?
No gold can buy you entrance there;
But beggared Love may go all bare—
No wisdom won with weariness;
But Love goes in with Folly's dress—
No fame that wit could ever win;
But only Love may lead Love in
To Arcady, to Arcady.

Ah, woe is me, through all my days
Wisdom and wealth I both have got,
And fame and name, and great men's praise,
But Love, ah, Love! I have it not.
There was a time, when life was new—
But far away, and half forgot—
I only know her eyes were blue;
But Love—I fear I knew it not.
We did not wed, for lack of gold,
And she is dead, and I am old.
All things have come since then to me,
Save Love, ah, Love! and Arcady.

Ah, then I fear we part (quoth he),
My way's for Love and Arcady.

But you, you fare alone, like me;
The gray is likewise in your hair.
What love have you to lead you there,
To Arcady, to Arcady?

Ah, no, not lonely do I fare;
My true companion's Memory.
With Love he fills the Spring-time air;
With Love he clothes the Winter tree.
Oh, past this poor horizon's bound

My song goes straight to one who stands—
Her face all gladdening at the sound—
To lead me to the Spring-green lands,
To wander with enlacing hands.
The songs within my breast that stir
Are all of her, are all of her.
My maid is dead long years (quoth he),
She waits for me in Arcady.

Oh, yon's the way to Arcady,
To Arcady, to Arcady;
Oh, yon's the way to Arcady,
Where all the leaves are merry.

POETRY: *A Magazine of Verse*

LEAVE-TAKING

I do not know where either of us can turn
Just at first, waking from the sleep of each other.
I do not know how we can bear
The river struck by the gold plummet of the moon,
Or many trees shaken together in the darkness.
We shall wish not to be alone
And that love were not dispersed and set free—
Though you defeat me,
And I be heavy upon you.

But like earth heaped over the heart
Is love grown perfect.
Like a shell over the beat of life
Is love perfect to the last.
So let it be the same
Whether we turn to the dark or to the kiss of another;
Let us know this for leavetaking,
That I may not be heavy upon you,
That you may blind me no more.

By Louise Bogan

Un Silbido

From The Project Gutenberg EBook of **La Condenada**, by Vicente Blasco Ibáñez

El entusiasmo caldeaba el teatro. ¡Qué debut! ¡Qué _Lohengrin_! ¡Qué tiple aquella!

Sobre el rojo de las butacas destacábanse en el patio las cabezas descubiertas o las torres de lazos, flores y tules, inmóviles, sin que las aproximara el cuchicheo ni el fastidio; en los palcos silencio absoluto; nada de tertulias y conversaciones a media voz; arriba, en el infierno de la filarmonía rabiosa, llamado irónicamente paraíso, el entusiasmo se escapaba prolongado y ruidoso, como un inmenso suspiro de satisfacción, cada vez que sonaba la voz de la tiple, dulce, poderosa y robusta. ¡Qué noche! Todo parecía nuevo en el teatro. La orquesta era de ángeles: hasta la araña del centro daba más luz.

En aquel entusiasmo tomaba no poca parte el patriotismo satisfecho. La tiple era española, la López, sólo que ahora se anunciaba con el apellido de su esposo el tenor Franchetti; un gran artista que, casándose con ella, la había hecho ascender a la categoría de _estrella_. ¡Vaya una mujer! Legítima de la tierra. Esbelta, arrogante; brazos y garganta con adorables redondeces, y los blancos tules de Elsa amplios en la cintura, pero estrechos y casi estallando con la presión de soberbias curvas. Sus ojos negros, rasgados, de sombrío fuego, contrastaban con la rubia peluca de la condesa de Brabante. La hermosa española era en la escena la mujer tímida, dulce y resignada que soñó Wágner, confiando en la fuerza de su inocencia, esperando el auxilio de lo desconocido.

Al relatar su ensueño ante el emperador y su corte, cantó con expresión tan vagorosa y dulce, los brazos caídos y la extática mirada en lo alto, como si viese llegar montado en una nube al misterioso paladín, que el público no pudo contenerse ya, y como la retumbante descarga de una fila de cañones, salió de todos los huecos del teatro, hasta de los pasillos, la atronadora detonación de aplausos y gritos.

La modestia y la gracia con que saludaba enardeció aún más al público. ¡Qué mujer! Una verdadera señora; y en cuanto a buenos sentimientos, todos recordaban detalles de su biografía. Aquel padre anciano, al que todos los meses enviaba una pensión para que viviera con decencia: un viejo feliz, que desde Madrid seguía la carrera de triunfos de su hija por todo el mundo.

Aquello era conmovedor. Algunas señoras se llevaban a los ojos una punta del guante, y en el paraíso, un vejete lloriqueaba metiendo la nariz en el embozo de la capa para sofocar sus gemidos. Los vecinos se reían.

¡Vamos hombre, que no era para tanto!

La representación seguía su curso en medio de los ecos del entusiasmo. Ahora el heraldo invitaba a los presentes, por si alguno quería defender a Elsa. Bueno, adelante. Aquel público, que se sabía de memoria la ópera, estaba en el secreto. No se presentaría ningún guapo. Después, con acompañamiento de tétrica música, avanzaron las damas veladas para llevarse la condesa al suplicio. Todo era broma; Elsa estaba segura. Pero cuando los bravos guerreros brabanzones se agitaron en la escena, viendo a lo lejos el misterioso cisne y su barquilla, y se fue armando en la imperial corte una batahola de dos mil demonios, el público, por acción refleja, se movió ruidosamente, arrellanándose en el asiento, tosiendo, suspirando, revolviéndose para hacer provisión de silencio. ¡Qué emoción! Iba a presentarse Franchetti, el famoso tenor, un gran artista de quien se murmuraba que habíase casado con la López buscando una compensación a sus facultades decadentes en la frescura y valentía de su mujer. Aparte de esto, un maestrazo que sabía salir triunfante con auxilio del arte.

¡Ah!... Ya estaba allí, de pie en el esquife, apoyado en larga espada, el escudo embrazado, cubierto el pecho de escamas de acero, irguiendo su arrogante figura de buen mozo festejado por toda la aristocracia de Europa, y deslumbrando de cabeza a pies, cual un pescado de plata envuelto en seda.

Silencio absoluto; aquello parecía una iglesia. El tenor miraba su cisne, como si allí no hubiese otro ser digno de atención, y en el místico ambiente fue desarrollándose un hilo de voz tenue, dulce, vagoroso, cual si viniera de una distancia invisible.

¡Mercè, mercè, cigno gentile!...

¿Qué fue lo que estremeció todo el teatro, poniendo de pie a los espectadores? Algo estridente, como si acabara de rasgarse la vieja decoración del fondo; un silbido rabioso, feroz, desesperado, que pareció hacer oscilar las luces de la sala.

¡Silbar a Franchetti antes de oírle! ¡Un tenor de cuatro mil francos! La gente de palcos y butacas miró al paraíso con el ceño fruncido; pero arriba la protesta fue más ruidosa. ¡Granuja! ¡Canalla! ¡Golfo! ¡A la cárcel con él! Y todo el público, arremolinándose, de pie y con el puño amenazante, señalaba al vejete que, cuando cantaba la tiple, metía la nariz en la capa para llorar, y ahora se erguía intentando en vano hacerse oír. ¡A la cárcel! ¡A la cárcel!

Pisando gente entró la pareja, y el viejo pasó a empujones de banco en banco, abofeteando a todos con su capa caída y contestando con

desesperados manoteos a los insultos y amenazas, mientras que el público rompía a aplaudir estrepitosamente, para animar a Franchetti, que había interrumpido su canto.

En el pasillo detuviéronse el viejo y los guardias, respirando ansiosamente, magullados por el gentío. Algunos espectadores les siguieron.

--¡Parece imposible!--dijo uno de los guardias--. Una persona de edad y que parece decente...

--¿Y usted qué sabe?--gritó el viejo con expresión agresiva--. Mis razones tengo para hacer lo que he hecho. ¿Sabe usted quién soy yo? Pues soy el padre de Conchita, de esa que se llama en el cartel la Franchetti, de la que aplauden con tanto entusiasmo los imbéciles. ¡Qué tal!... ¿Les parece raro que silbe?... También yo he leído los periódicos; ¡qué modo de mentir! «La hija amantísima...» «El padre querido y feliz...» ¡Mentira, todo mentira! Mi hija ya no es mi hija, es un culebrón, y ese italiano un granuja. Sólo se acuerda de mí para enviarme una limosna, ¡como si el corazón comiera y le contentase el dinero! Yo no tomo un cuarto de ellos: primero morir; prefiero molestar a los amigos.

Ahora sí que era oído el viejo. Los que le rodeaban sentían hambrienta curiosidad ante una historia que tan de cerca tocaba a dos celebridades artísticas. Y el señor López, insultado por todo un público, deseaba comunicar a alguien su indignación, aunque fuese a los guardias.

--No tengo más familia que _esa_. Comprendan mi situación. Se crió en mis brazos: la pobrecita no conoció a su madre. _Sacó_ voz; dijo que quería ser tiple o morir, y aquí tienen ustedes al bonachón de su padre decidido a que fuese una celebridad o a morir con ella. Los maestros dijeron: ¡a Milán! Y allá va el señor López con su niña, después de dimitir su empleo y vender los cuatro terrones heredados de su padre. ¡Válgame Dios y cuánto he sufrido! ¡Cuanto he trotado antes del debut, de maestro en maestro y de empresario en empresario! ¡Qué humillaciones, qué vigilancias para guardar a mi niña, y qué privaciones; sí, señores, privaciones y hasta hambre, cuidadosamente ocultada, para que nada faltase a la señorita! Y cuando cantó por fin y comenzó a sonar su nombre, cuando yo me extasiaba ante los resultados de mi sacrificio, llega ese fantasmón de Franchetti, y cantando sobre las tablas dúos y más dúos de amor, acaban por enamorarse, y tengo que casar a la niña para que no me ponga mal gesto ni me parta el alma con sus lloros. Ustedes no saben lo que es un matrimonio de cantantes. El egoísmo haciendo gorgoritos. Ni cariño, ni corazón, ni nada; la voz, sólo la voz. Al ladrón de mi yerno le molesté desde el primer momento; tenía celos de mí, quería alejarme para dominar en absoluto a su mujer; y ella, que ama a ese payaso, que cada vez está más unida a él por las

ovaciones, dijo que sí a todo. ¡Las exigencias del arte! ¡Su modo de vivir, que no les permite deberse a la familia, sino al arte! Estas fueron sus excusas, y me enviaron a España; y yo, por reñir con ese farsante, reñí con mi hija. Hasta hoy no les había visto... Señores, llévenme ustedes donde quieran, pero declaro que siempre que pueda vendré a silbar a ese ladrón italiano... He estado enfermo, estoy solo: pues revienta, viejo, como si no tuvieras hija. Tu Conchita no es tuya; es de Franchetti... pero no; es del arte. Y ahora digo yo: Si el arte consiste en que las hijas olviden a los padres que por ellas se sacrificaron, digo que me futro en el arte y que más me alegraría encontrarme a mi Concha al entrar en casa remendando mis calcetines.

Man Of Distinction

By Michael Shaara

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*Being unique is a matter of pride--but being
a complete mathematical impossibility?*

The remarkable distinction of Thatcher Blitt did not come to the attention of a bemused world until late in the year 2180. Although Thatcher Blitt was, by the standards of his time, an extremely successful man financially, this was not considered _real_ distinction. Unfortunately for Blitt, it never has been.

The history books do not record the names of the most successful merchants of the past unless they happened by chance to have been connected with famous men of the time. Thus Croesus is remembered largely for his contributions to famous Romans and successful armies. And Haym Solomon, a similarly wealthy man, would have been long forgotten had he not also been a financial mainstay of the American Revolution and consorted with famous, if impoverished, statesmen.

So if Thatcher Blitt was distinct among men, the distinction was not immediately apparent. He was a small, gaunt, fragile man who had the kind of face and bearing that are perfect for movie crowd scenes. Absolutely forgettable. Yet Thatcher Blitt was one of the foremost businessmen of his time. For he was president and founder of that noble institution, Genealogy, Inc.

Thatcher Blitt was not yet 25 when he made the discovery which was to make him among the richest men of his time. His discovery was, like all great ones, obvious yet profound. He observed that every person had a father.

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Carrying on with this thought, it followed inevitably that every father had a father, and so on. In fact, thought Blitt, when you considered

the matter rightly, everyone alive was the direct descendant of untold numbers of fathers, down through the ages, all descending, one after another, father to son. And so backward, unquestionably, into the unrecognizable and perhaps simian fathers of the past.

This thought, on the face of it not particularly profound, struck young Blitt like a blow. He saw that since each man had a father, and so on and so on, it ought to be possible to construct the genealogy of every person now alive. In short, it should be possible to trace your family back, father by father, to the beginning of time.

And of course it was. For that was the era of the time scanner. And with a time scanner, it would be possible to document your family tree with perfect accuracy. You could find out exactly from whom you had sprung.

And so Thatcher Blitt made his fortune. He saw clearly at the beginning what most of us see only now, and he patented it. He was aware not only of the deep-rooted sense of snobbishness that exists in many people, but also of the simple yet profound force of curiosity. Who exactly, one says to oneself, _was_ my forty-times-great-great-grandfather? A Roman Legionary? A Viking? A pyramid builder? One of Xenophon's Ten Thousand? Or was he, perhaps (for it is always possible), Alexander the Great?

Thatcher Blitt had a product to sell. And sell he did, for other reasons that he alone had noted at the beginning. The races of mankind have twisted and turned with incredible complexity over the years; the numbers of people have been enormous.

With thirty thousand years in which to work, it was impossible that there was not, somewhere along the line, a famous ancestor for everybody. A minor king would often suffice, or even a general in some forgotten army. And if these direct ancestors were not enough, it was fairly simple to establish close blood kinship with famous men. The blood lines of Man, you see, begin with a very few people. In all of ancient Greece, in the time of Pericles, there were only a few thousand families.

Seeing all this, Thatcher Blitt became a busy man. It was necessary not only to patent his idea, but to produce the enormous capital needed to found a large organization. The cost of the time scanner was at first prohibitive, but gradually that obstacle was overcome, only for Thatcher to find that the government for many years prevented him from using it. Yet Blitt was indomitable. And eventually, after years of heart-rending waiting, Genealogy, Inc., began operations.

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It was a tremendous success. Within months, the very name of the company and its taut slogan, "An Ancestor for Everybody," became household words. There was but one immediate drawback. It soon became apparent that, without going back very far into the past, it was sometimes impossible to tell who was really the next father in line. The mothers were certain, but the fathers were something else again. This was a ponderable point.

But Blitt refused to be discouraged. He set various electronic engineers to work on the impasse and a solution was found. An ingenious device which tested blood electronically through the scanner--based on the different sine waves of the blood groups--saved the day. That invention was the last push Genealogy, Inc., was ever to need. It rolled on to become one of the richest and, for a long while, most exclusive corporations in the world.

Yet it was still many years before Thatcher Blitt himself had time to rest. There were patent infringements to be fought, new developments in the labs to be watched, new ways to be found to make the long and arduous task of father-tracing easier and more economical. Hence he was well past sixty when he at last had time to begin considering himself.

He had become by this time a moderately offensive man. Surrounded as he had been all these years by pomp and luxury, by impressive names and extraordinary family trees, he had succumbed at last. He became unbearably name-conscious.

He began by regrouping his friends according to their ancestries. His infrequent parties were characterized by his almost Parliamentary system of seating. No doubt, all this had been in Thatcher Blitt to begin with--it may well be, in perhaps varying quantities, in all of us--but it grew with him, prospered with him. Yet in all those years he never once inspected his own forebears.

You may well ask, was he afraid? One answers, one does not know. But at any rate, the fact remains that Thatcher Blitt, at the age of 67, was one of the few rich men in the world who did not know who exactly their ancestors had been.

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And so, at last, we come to the day when Thatcher Blitt was sitting alone in his office, one languid hand draped vacantly over his brow, listening with deep satisfaction to the hum and click of the enormous operations which were going on in the building around him.

What moved him that day remains uncertain. Perhaps it was that, from

where he was sitting, he could see row upon row of action pictures of famous men which had been taken from his time scanners. Or perhaps it was simply that this profound question had been gnawing at him all these years, deeper and deeper, and on this day broke out into the light.

But whatever the reason, at 11:02 that morning, he leaped vitally from his chair. He summoned Cathcart, his chief assistant, and gave him the immortal command.

"Cathcart!" he grated, stung to the core of his being. "Who am I?"

Cathcart rushed off to find out.

There followed some of the most taut and fateful days in the brilliant history of Genealogy, Inc. Father-tracing is, of course, a painstaking business. But it was not long before word had begun to filter out to interested people.

The first interesting discovery made was a man called Blott, in eighteenth century England. (No explanation was ever given for the name's alteration from Blott to Blitt. Certain snide individuals took this to mean that the name had been changed as a means to avoid prosecution, or some such, and immediately began making light remarks about the Blotts on old Blitt's escutcheon.) This Blott had the distinction of having been a wineseller of considerable funds.

This reputedly did not sit well with Thatcher Blitt. Merchants, he snapped, however successful, are not worthy of note. He wanted empire builders. He wanted, at the very least, a name he had heard about. A name that appeared in the histories.

His workers furiously scanned back into the past.

Months went by before the next name appeared. In 9th century England, there was a wandering minstrel named John (last name unprintable) who achieved considerable notoriety as a ballad singer, before dying an unnatural death in the boudoir of a lady of high fashion. Although the details of this man's life were of extreme interest, they did not impress the old man. He was, on the contrary, rather shaken. A minstrel. And a rogue to boot.

There were shakeups in Genealogy, Inc. Cathcart was replaced by a man named Jukes, a highly competent man despite his interesting family name. Jukes forged ahead full steam past the birth of Christ (no relation). But he was well into ancient Egypt before the search began to take on the nature of a crisis.

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Up until then, there was simply nobody. Or to be more precise, nobody but _nobodies_. It was incredible, all the laws of chance were against it, but there was, actually, not a single ancestor of note. And no way of faking one, for Thatcher Blitt couldn't be fooled by his own methods. What there was was simply an unending line of peasants, serfs, an occasional foot soldier or leather worker. Past John the ballad-singer, there was no one at all worth reporting to the old man.

This situation would not continue, of course. There were so few families for men to spring from. The entire Gallic nation, for example, a great section of present-day France, sprang from the family of one lone man in the north of France in the days before Christ. Every native Frenchman, therefore, was at least the son of a king. It was impossible for Thatcher Blitt to be less.

So the hunt went on from day to day, past ancient Greece, past Jarmo, past the wheel and metals and farming and on even past all civilization, outward and backward into the cold primordial wastes of northern Germany.

And still there was nothing. Though Jukes lived in daily fear of losing his job, there was nothing to do but press on. In Germany, he reduced Blitt's ancestor to a slovenly little man who was one of only three men in the entire tribe, or family, one of three in an area which now contains millions. But Blitt's ancestor, true to form, was simply a member of the tribe. As was his father before him.

Yet onward it went. Westward back into the French caves, southward into Spain and across the unrecognizable Mediterranean into a verdant North Africa, backward in time past even the Cro-Magnons, and yet ever backward, 30,000 years, 35,000, with old Blitt reduced now practically to gibbering and still never an exceptional forebear.

There came a time when Jukes had at last, inevitably, to face the old man. He had scanned back as far as he could. The latest ancestor he had unearthed for Blitt was a hairy creature who did not walk erect. And yet, even here, Blitt refused to concede.

"It may be," he howled, "it _must_ be that my ancestor _was_ the first man to walk erect or light a fire--to do _something_."

It was not until Jukes pointed out that all those things had been already examined and found hopeless that Blitt finally gave in. Blitt was a relative, of course, of the first man to stand erect, the man with the first human brain. But so was everybody else on the face of the Earth. There was truly nowhere else to explore. What would be found

now would be only the common history of mankind.

Blitt retired to his chambers and refused to be seen.

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The story went the rounds, as such stories will. And it was then at last, after 40,000 years of insignificance, that the name of Blitt found everlasting distinction. The story was picked up, fully documented, by psychologists and geneticists of the time, and inserted into textbooks as a profound commentary on the forces of heredity. The name of Thatcher Blitt in particular has become famous, has persisted until this day. For he is the only man yet discovered, or ever likely to be discovered, with this particular distinction.

In 40,000 years of scanner-recorded history, the blood line of Blitt (or Blott) never once produced an exceptional man.

That record is unsurpassed.



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